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# AMERICANIZATION

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A Program of Action and Service  
for the Churches



Home Missions Council  
Council of Women for Home Missions

156 Fifth Avenue  
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## FOREWORD

What can we *Do?* is the practical question put by many pastors and church-workers, when confronted by the big tasks involved in the complex subject of Americanization. There are many books and many articles, admirable for the most part both in substance and form, which set forth in detail the conditions of the foreigner in our midst, the needs of Americanizing and Christianizing him; and most of the principles which should be observed in the process; but very few state the specific things which may be *Done*.

The following is a program for concrete action; and it is given in terms which show its applicability to small places, as well as large places, and to practically all churches, whether small and poorly equipped, or larger and well equipped.

This pamphlet is published by the Home Missions Council and the Council of Women for Home Missions, at 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City, for the Home Mission Boards of the constituent denominations, and should be procured for distribution at each denomination's headquarters.

# An Americanization Program for the Churches

## The Spirit

This spirit is more than toleration. Foreigners must not be thought of contemptuously, or even with indifference. In almost every instance some of their countrymen have contributed to America and to all the world the largest measure of genius in art, literature, inventiveness, exploration and leadership, and some of these foreigners, now about us, who seem strange, and because of their strangeness, uncouth, have still quite as much to give to us, as we have to give to them. The expectation of learning from the foreigner imparts zest to the effort of explaining to him things which he should know.

There must be in the churches the Christian spirit of interest in, and willingness to minister to, foreigners.

This spirit is created and cultivated by

1. The right kind of preaching.
2. Study courses. All home mission boards can give information respecting text books, where they may be procured, and other material for courses of study.

[The Council of Women for Home Missions, (156 Fifth Ave., New York City); and the Missionary Education Movement (160 Fifth Ave., New York City), issue text books for different ages. Noteworthy is "Christian Americanization, a Task for the Churches," by Rev. Charles A. Brooks, at 75 cents in cloth, and 40 cents in paper.]

3. Investigations of local conditions. The pastor and his helpers can make these investigations. Frequently the facts are already known, and need but to be assembled. The study of a community awakens interest and broadens sympathy.
4. Prayer. How can the church do her work in the field of fellowship unless she prays?



## The Equipment

New equipment, costing money, is not an indispensable necessity, altho many new features may be desirable, such as:

1. A rented room in a foreign section, if the church itself is far away.
2. A vestry may require moveable chairs, instead of fixed seats or settees, so that it can be arranged more like a home, breaking up formality and stiffness, and suggesting sociability and comfort.
3. A parish house, or vestry, or special room, may need books, magazines, pictures and games, adapted to the people whom it is to serve.
4. Few meeting houses are utilized as fully as they should be. They can be made very attractive to all classes of people.

## The Church People

1. The pastor.
  - a. He must interpret the foreigners to the people, and his people to the foreigners about them. (How many pastors are themselves of foreign stock and origin!)
  - b. He should know the foreigners in their homes and where they work. This is a matter of visiting and acquaintance.
  - c. If he can speak one of the foreign tongues in use about him, it will be of immeasurable help.
2. The Sunday School Workers.
  - a. It is desirable to set an example of simplicity in the dress of the pupils, so that foreigners need not feel ashamed to come to Sunday School.
  - b. Little children particularly should be gathered into the Kindergartens and Primary Departments.
  - c. The pupils should be encouraged to solicit their foreign playmates to attend Sunday



School, and should be taught how to befriend and help them.

- d. In suitable instances special classes should be established.
- e. Sunday School concerts, entertainments and picnics should be adapted to the understanding and enjoyment of foreigners, and pains should be taken to secure their coöperation and participation.

### 3. The Young People's Societies.

In addition to their share in the Sunday School, and in other forms of church services, which reach foreigners, the young people can particularly do these things:

- a. Report upon new groups, new families, and even individuals, who come into the neighborhood.
- b. Teach some foreigners the English language, either in groups, or singly, by day or in the evening.
- c. Help foreigners celebrate some of their own festival days, and help them to understand and celebrate our national holidays.
- d. In some cases help promote a pageant, either to reproduce some scenes dear to the foreigners, which will make them better understood by Americans, or to present some historical scenes which help them better to understand America and American spirit.


### 4. The Women of the Church.

Because foreign women remain at home in most instances, they are the most tenacious of old-world customs, and the least inclined to adopt, or even to become acquainted with, the new customs.

The women of the church should

- a. Have a well-planned system of calling upon the foreign women in their own neighborhoods and in the neighborhood of the church.
- b. Help the foreign women learn how to use American utensils, American foods, and become accustomed to American ways.
- c. Teach them the English language.
- d. Show them how to care for children and family under American conditions.



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- e. Explain some of the laws and customs affecting their children, especially with reference to school and work.
  - f. Be friendly and motherly to domestic servants and thoughtful of their welfare, and through them reach out sympathetically into their homes, or into the circle of their acquaintances. Sunday in many homes is a day of entertainment, and servants are allowed scant, if any, opportunity for church or for rest.
  - g. Deal kindly with trades-people who are foreigners.

5. The Men of the Church.

- a. If there is a men's class, or club, in the church, it can become a point of contact with foreigners and strangers, through its members, through committees, through special features.
- b. Christian men in business can take pains to establish friendly relations with foreigners.
- c. Christian employers should show their Christian principles in dealing with their employees.
- d. Christian men can open their own homes to their employees, particularly on a Sunday, and can take some of them to church.
- e. Men can help foreigners learn the meaning of American life, and can particularly help them prepare for naturalization and all that is involved in political action. When foreigners are naturalized Christian men should see that the service is conducted in a suitable manner, dignified and impressive.
- f. In many cases chambers of commerce and other organizations can be enlisted in securing just and courteous treatment for foreigners both in their groups and as individuals.
- g. In large communities homes for foreign men and women, agencies for their employment, charitable organizations for their relief, and hospitals for their treatment when sick, may be needed. In all of these cases Christian men and women may be of inestimable help.


## Methods

Many of the best methods are implied in what has been said respecting the people who do the work. A church must use the people whom it has; and can employ usually only those methods which its own people can operate.

The following methods, additional to those already suggested, should be employed where possible:

1. Foreigners are strangers to the law. They are liable to get into trouble, and are liable to be imposed upon. The church should have a place and a time for giving legal advice and legal help, either through some lawyer or other competent person, who may or may not be one of its members.
2. The foreigners are apt to live in unsanitary, crowded quarters. They need a visiting nurse, or a friendly visitor, or a physician, not only in time of sickness, but at other times, to prevent disease.
3. A minister, who can preach in the foreigner's language, can usually be secured from the denomination's Home Mission Board, or perhaps from a neighboring church, or nearby town. His message may attract the foreigners and help them to feel at home in the church.
4. Church members should take pains to invite foreigners to their homes, socially, for the sake of forming acquaintance and of promoting good fellowship. An opportunity to see the interior of an American home may be a means of grace to the stranger.
5. The public school is one of the greatest Americanizing agencies, perhaps the greatest in existence. The church should cooperate with the public school. As a rule it is desirable for Christian parents to send their children to the public school and not to a private school, or "select" Academy. The mingling of children of different bloods and different homes is of inestimable value, to both the native children and the foreign children, in the process of Americanizing both.



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6. The subject of recreation and amusement must not be forgotten. Play grounds for children, community "sings" and folk-dancing, concerts, and sometimes lectures, or forums, and "talks," and the moving pictures, may be furnished by, or supervised by, or encouraged by, the church. The church must not be censorious, but must be sympathetic and helpful in all of these directions.
  7. The church itself must make its religious *faith* manifest in its works. Men want religion. They are often suspicious of its organized forms, fearing lest other than purely disinterested motives prevail. But a manifestation of human interest and of Christian love and service will tend to draw foreigners into the church itself. A church which wins the foreigners of its vicinity unto itself is worth many "missions," established for special purposes.
  8. The greatest thing in the world is Divine love shown in human interest and sympathetic service.

## The Goal

The goal of Americanization methods is

1. *Acquaintance.* For unless men become acquainted, they cannot coalesce.
2. *Goodwill.* A Patronizing manner and spirit are offensive. Goodwill rests upon mutual confidence and respect.
3. *Coöperation.* Fellow citizens must share ideals, as far as possible, and combine, for the realization of their ideals.
4. *The Spirit of Christ* must find expression in as large a degree as possible, under whatsoever names it may be phrased.